

## **ABSTRACT**

A grip element having a soft, compressible and deformable outer layer supported by an underlying support structure sufficiently rigid to maintain a receiving channel of the grip element in an open configuration. The support structure facilitates manipulation of the grip element and assembly of the grip element onto a hand-held article without having the outer layer collapse on itself as would occur without the support structure as a result of the soft, deformable nature of the outer layer. The grip element may be formed separately from the hand-held article on which it is to be assembled, and then positioned thereon such that the hand-held article is sold with the grip element pre-assembled thereon. If desired, the grip element may be provided separate from the hand-held article, the outer layer providing a readily compressible and deformable soft cushioning surface and the support structure facilitating insertion of the outer layer over at least a portion of a hand-held article. The outer layer and support structure may be co-molded such that the materials thereof are permanently and directly bonded together. If desired, a pattern may be formed on the outer layer, such as grooves, dimples, ribs, bumps, a lattice pattern, or a honeycomb pattern.